

REMARKS

Claims 4-12 and 14 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1-3 and 13 are cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein, and the specification and claim 12 is amended to correct claim dependency. No new matter is added by any of these amendments.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge that claims 4-11 and 14 are allowed. As such, Applicants amend claim 12 to depend from allowed claim 4.

Reconsideration based on the following remarks is respectfully requested.

I. Amendment Entry with Request for Continued Examination

Entry of this amendment is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 because the amendments: a) place the application in condition for allowance for all the reasons discussed herein; b) do not raise any new issues requiring further search or consideration; c) place the application in better condition for appeal if necessary; and d) address formal requirements of the Final Rejection and preceding Office Action.

One dependent claim is amended to change its dependency from one of the canceled independent claims to an allowed claim. More specifically, claim 12 is amended to depend from claim 4. The foregoing amendments do not raise any new issues after Final Rejection. Therefore, entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 because the amendments place the application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request entry of this Amendment.

II. Claim 12 Defines Patentable Subject Matter

The Final Office Action rejects claims 1-3 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent 5,811,683 to Yoshioka *et al.* (Yoshioka); and claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Yoshioka in view of U.S. Patent 6,092,029 to Bently.

The §102 rejection is rendered moot with respect to claims 1-3 and 13, and the §103 rejection is respectfully traversed with respect to claim 12. In particular, claims 1-3 and 13 are cancelled, and claim 12 has been amended to depend from allowed claim 4. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 12 is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§102 and 103 be withdrawn.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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